

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 902

By Henry

A RESOLUTION to recognize Head Coach Rick Byrd and the Belmont University Men's Basketball Team upon completing an extraordinary season.

WHEREAS, the General Assembly is pleased to specially honor and commend those successful sports teams that, through their magnificent exploits, bring honor to Tennessee and serve as exceptional ambassadors of this State; and

WHEREAS, the Belmont University men's basketball Bruins are one such estimable team that achieved an extraordinary level of success during the 2005-2006 season, establishing a record of twenty wins against only eleven losses on their way to claiming the Atlantic Sun Conference Championship and becoming the first Bruin program in school history to advance to the NCAA Tournament; and

WHEREAS, the Belmont University Bruins rolled through the Atlantic Sun Conference Tournament, prevailing over Campbell (90-76) and Stetson (72-59) to reach the Championship Game; and

WHEREAS, having shared the regular season championship with their archrival Lipscomb University, the Belmont Bruins relished the opportunity to play their cross-town foe for a third and decisive time; they basked in the glow of victory after defeating Lipscomb in overtime (74-69) and proudly accepted their first invitation to participate in the "Big Dance"; and

WHEREAS, Bruin Justin Hare was named Atlantic Sun Conference Tournament Most Valuable Player after scoring a career-high 32 points in the championship game against Lipscomb; teammate Josh Goodwin joined him on the All-Tournament team; and

WHEREAS, Bruin teammates Boomer Herndon and Justin Hare earned second team All-Atlantic Sun honors, and Bruin Andy Wicke was named to the All-Atlantic Sun All-Freshman team; and

WHEREAS, regular season milestones were set by Belmont Bruin Senior Co-Captain Brian Collins, who scored his 1,000th career point in a win against Mercer, and Bruin teammate Josh Goodwin, who set a Belmont record and tied the Atlantic Sun record for most three pointers in a game, making eleven in the first conference game of the season against ETSU; and

WHEREAS, after advancing to the NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament, on Selection Sunday the Belmont Bruins received a fifteenth seed and were placed in the Oakland Region, where their opponent in the first round game in San Diego was a perennial basketball powerhouse, the Bruins of UCLA , who have won eleven NCAA men's basketball championships; and

WHEREAS, thrilling their enthusiastic fans and receiving national media attention, the Belmont Bruins and the entire Belmont University community most deservedly enjoyed the well-earned fruits of years of hard work; after moving their athletic programs in 1996, from the NAIA all the way up to Division I of the NCAA, they had achieved a dream that was nine years in the making; and

WHEREAS, earning the respect of basketball fans nationwide, the Belmont Bruins controlled most of the first half against UCLA, before ultimately succumbing to a very talented team that would eventually finish as tournament runner-up, falling in the NCAA Championship game to Florida; and

WHEREAS, a truly outstanding basketball team, the 2005-2006 Belmont Bruins finished the season ranked 4th nationally in field goal percentage (.493), 8th in scoring (80.6 ppg), and 15th in assists (17.6); Bruin Josh Goodwin ranked eleventh in the nation in three-point field goal percentage (.456); and

WHEREAS, displaying great sportsmanship and outstanding character, the Belmont University men's basketball team conducted themselves in a manner appropriate to the integrity of the State of Tennessee after a valiant effort in the NCAA Tournament; and

WHEREAS, the Belmont University Bruins men's basketball team includes Seniors Brian Collins, Dan Oliver, and Michael Modlin; Juniors Adrian Jones, Josh Goodwin, Boomer Herndon, Cole Rose, and Andrew Preston; Sophomores Shane Dansby, Justin Hare, and Will Peeples; and Freshmen Keaton Belcher, Andy Wicke, Andrew House, Henry Harris, and Matthew Dotson; and

WHEREAS, this extraordinary basketball program has been shaped and forged by nationally-acclaimed Head Coach Rick Byrd, a member of the NAIA Hall of Fame, who marked his twenty-fifth year as a head coach and his twentieth season with the Bruins by registering his 400th win at Belmont during the 2005-2006 season; he now holds a career record of 493 wins against only 284 losses; and

WHEREAS, in addition to the able leadership of Head Coach Rick Byrd, Belmont's outstanding staff includes Associate Head Coach Casey Alexander, Assistant Coach Brian Ayers, Assistant Coach Roger Idstrom, Head Athletics Trainer Paul Malloy, Strength and Conditioning Coach Scott Kirchmann, and Athletic Director Mike Strickland; and

WHEREAS, champions both on and off the court, Belmont boasts a cumulative team grade point average of 3.164, having earned a 3.377 average during the fall semester, and placing twelve out of their sixteen members on the Academic All-Conference team, including Justin Hare, who was named to the 2006 Academic All-District IV Men's Basketball team with a 3.81 grade point average; and

WHEREAS, the Bruins' academic success upholds the high standards Belmont University's athletics programs have established in winning the Atlantic Sun Conference's All-Academic Trophy for four consecutive years; Belmont is the only school in conference history to win the award four times. In 2004-05 nearly seventy percent of Belmont athletes earned Academic All-Conference honors by achieving at least a 3.0 grade point average during their semester of competition; and

WHEREAS, outstanding young men who give of their time and talents off the court in the global community, five members of the Bruins basketball team – Justin Hare, Josh Goodwin, Andy Wicke, Andrew Preston and Dan Oliver – participated along with other Belmont student-athletes in the 2005 Sports Evangelism mission trip to Kiev and Zhitomir, Ukraine, where they

worked with a local church in ministry to children in area orphanages, leading worship services and reaching out to orphans through soccer, basketball, volleyball and other sports; and

WHEREAS, the men's varsity basketball players at Belmont University epitomize all that is good in today's student-athlete, as they have achieved a premier level of success in competition while exhibiting the highest degree of character both on and off the court; and

WHEREAS, the perseverance, determination, work ethic, and talent of this group of young men not only made possible an extraordinary basketball season, but also surely bode well for their success in every future enterprise; and

WHEREAS, this General Assembly finds it appropriate to acknowledge and applaud the Belmont University Bruins for winning the 2005-2006 Atlantic Sun Conference Championship, qualifying for the NCAA Tournament, and for serving as examples of the exceptional quality of Tennessee's student athletes; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we hereby congratulate Head Coach Rick Byrd and the members of the Belmont University men's basketball team on their outstanding 2005-2006 season and wish them every success in all future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.